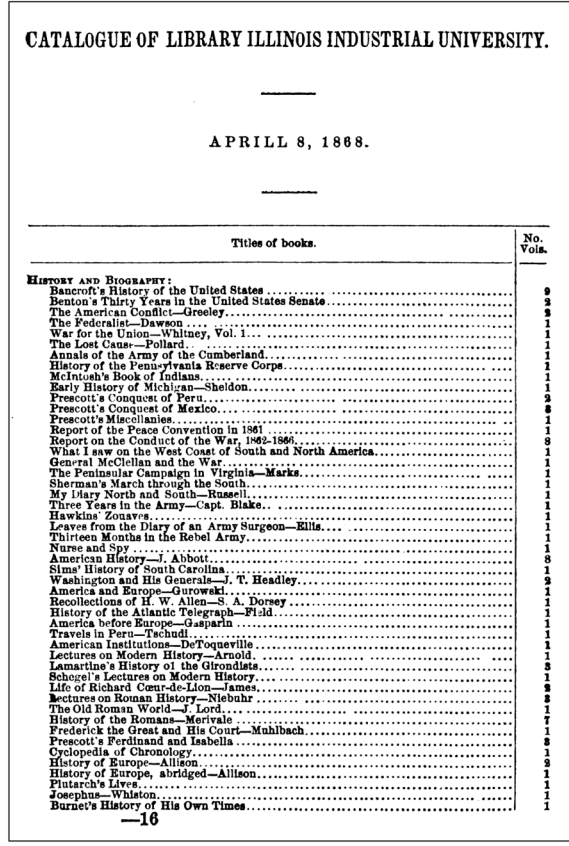
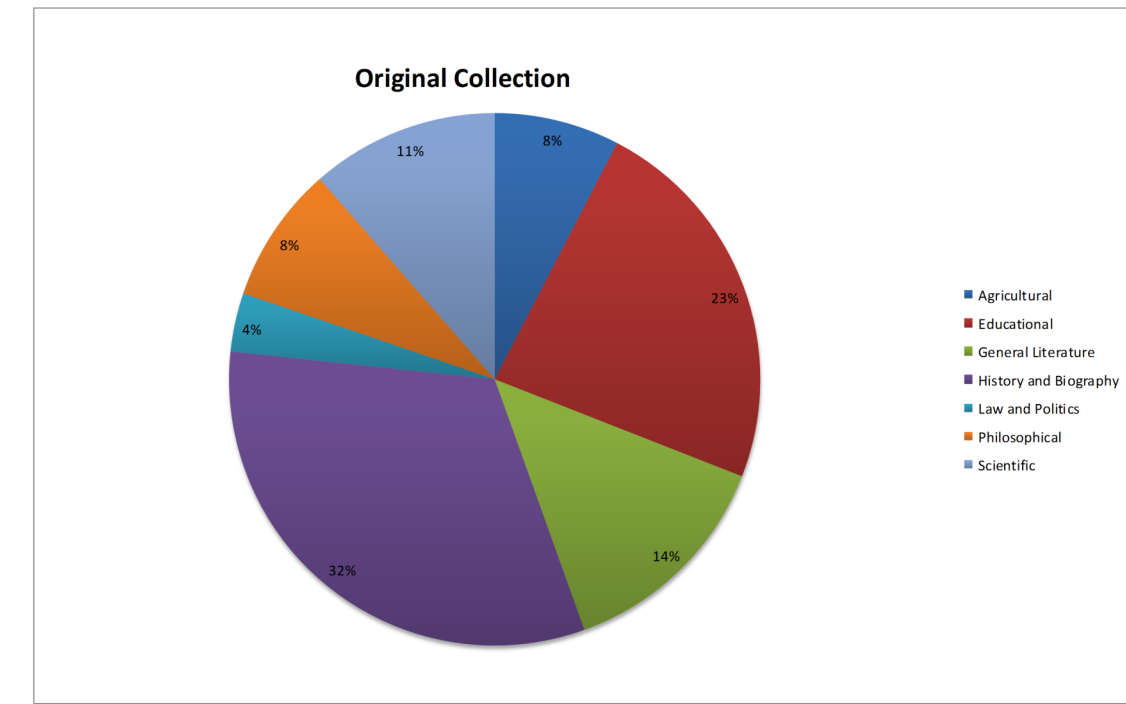


# The Original Library Collection

The University of Illinois, founded in 1867 under the original name of the Illinois Industrial University, was renamed the University of Illinois in 1885. The Library was originally housed in the office of the first regent, John Milton Gregory, and students were “required to check out each book with the Regent himself” (Ebert, 1967, p. 1). The original collection consisted of 420 titles in 1,078 volumes.



An editorial in the Daily Illini from 1878 bemoans the lack of a card catalog, indicating that “It takes five times as long to find a book that has in it what one wishes to know, than it does to read it after it is found...What we need and should have is a printed catalogue of the books of the library.” The article went on to state, “We are proud of our library. We know it is a most excellent one and would like to see it used” (*Daily Illini*, 1878).

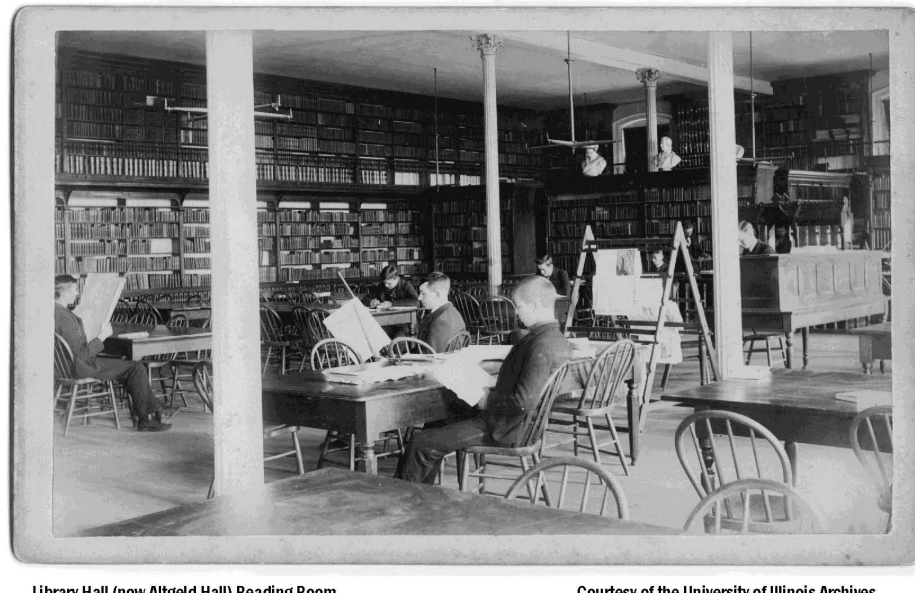


Regent Gregory purchased the nucleus of the library collection (271 titles in 644 volumes) on a buying trip to New York in 1868 for an average cost of \$1.58 per volume, including his expenses (Hoffman, 1982).

Sources  
Editorial. (January 1, 1878). *Daily Illini*, pp. 152-153. Accessed October 9, 2013. <https://www.library.illinois.edu/dnc/Default/Skins/UILUC/Client.asp?Skin=UILUC&AW=1382543569370&AppName=2>  
Hoffman, J. (1982). Regent Gregory and the Founding of the University Library, 1868. *Non Solus* 9, 34-43.

# A Collection Explosion: Evaluating a Collection 145 Years in the Making

Library Hall (now known as Altgeld Hall) was built in 1897 and was the University's first “purpose-built” library. The library had the capacity for 90,000 volumes and held 30,000 volumes when it first opened its doors (Peoples, 2011).



Library Hall (now Altgeld Hall) Reading Room

In 1914, Library Hall saw a major expansion, and yet in 1916 an article appeared in the *Urbana Daily Courier* titled “Growth of University Demands New Library.” The library was still overcrowded with 350,000 volumes and was forced to store collections in “non-fireproof buildings, a very undesirable condition” (p. 6). The *Courier* article pointed out that at that time Harvard had three million volumes, the New York Public Library had four and a half million volumes, the Library of Congress had six million volumes, and Berlin had seven million volumes. Even by meeting President James’ target of one million volumes, the University of Illinois would still be “distinctly a second-rate library” (p. 6).

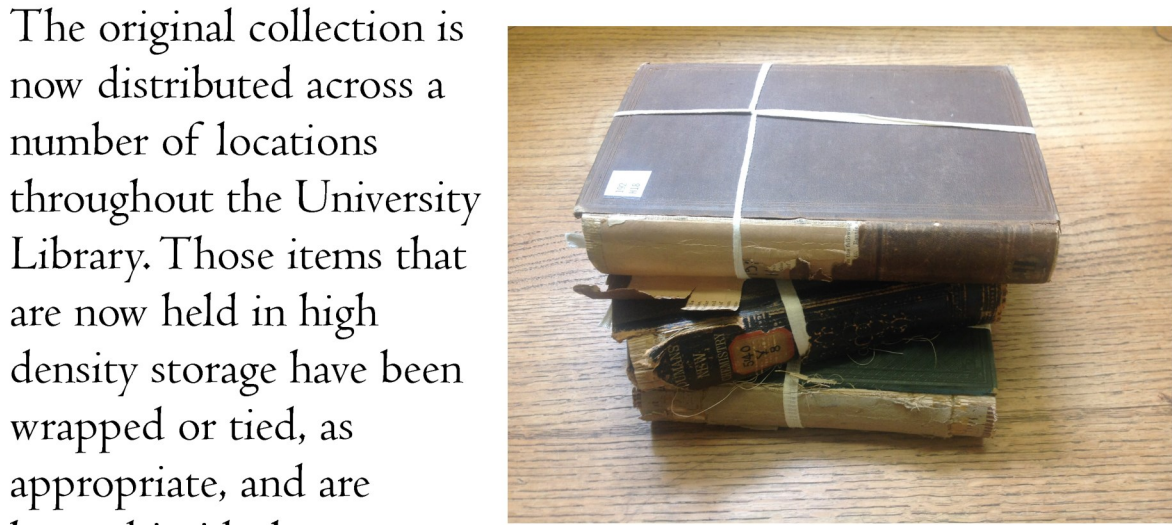


Main Library being built

The new library building, which is still used as the Main Library today, opened its doors in 1926 with 649,924 volumes, and the sought after one-millionth volume was acquired in 1935 (Peoples, 2011). The University made a concerted effort to improve the library facilities and grow the library collections in order to compete with the best universities in the nation. At the time of the library dedication in 1929, the library was ranked as the sixth-largest academic library in the country, behind Harvard University, Yale University, Columbia University, Cornell University, and the University of Chicago (Windsor 1927). Today, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library has celebrated the addition of its 13 millionth volume and ranks behind Harvard as the second largest academic library in the county.

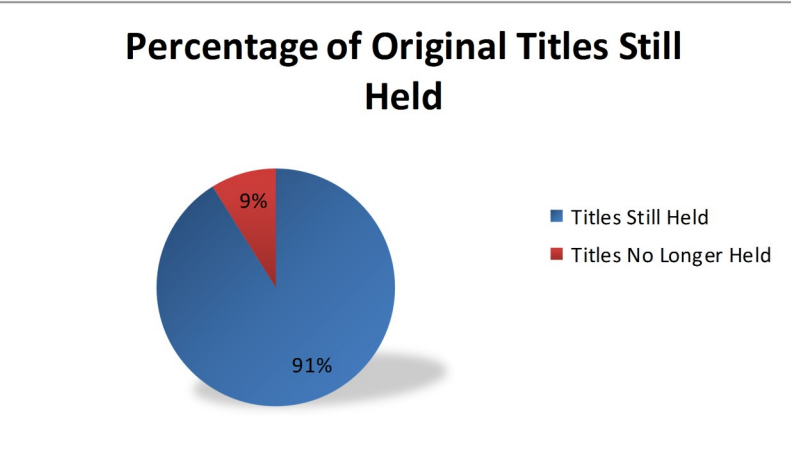
Sources  
Ebert, R. (1967). *An Illini Century: One hundred years of campus life*. University of Illinois Press: Urbana.  
Peoples, B. (2011). A Great Library on the Prairie: the History, Design, and Growth of the University of Illinois Library. *Library Trends*, 60(1), 134–151.  
Growth of university demands new library. (1916, January 10). *Urbana Daily Courier*, p. 6.  
Windsor, P.L. (1927, March 13). Only 5 university libraries surpass one here in size. *Daily Illini*.  
University of Illinois Senate Committee on the Library. (1913). *Reports 1912-1913*. University of Illinois Archives.  
University of Illinois Senate Committee on the Library. (1922). *Reports 1921-1922*. University of Illinois Archives.

# The Original Collection Today

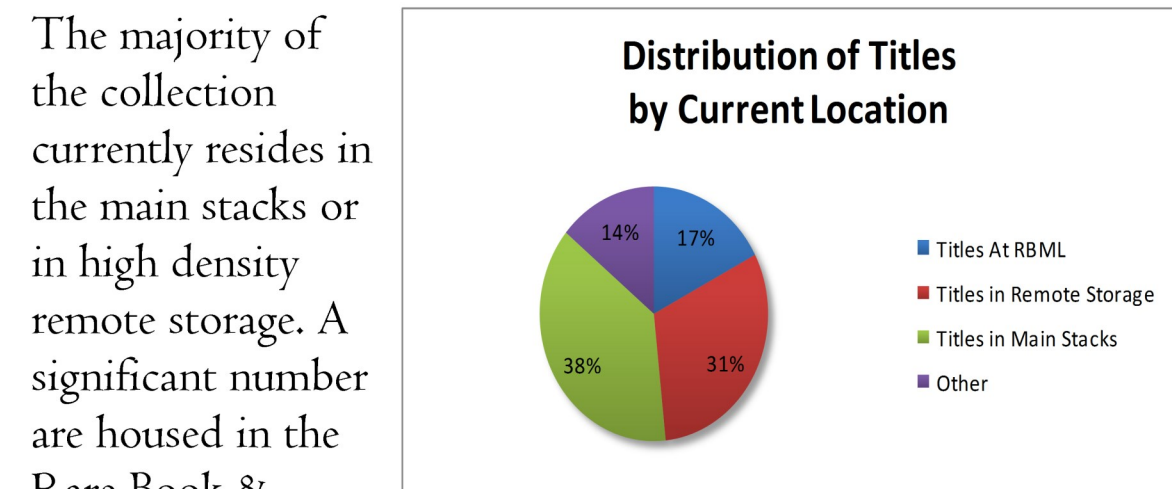


The original collection is now distributed across a number of locations throughout the University Library. Those items that are now held in high density storage have been wrapped or tied, as appropriate, and are housed in ideal preservation conditions. However, many of the titles require further conservation work.

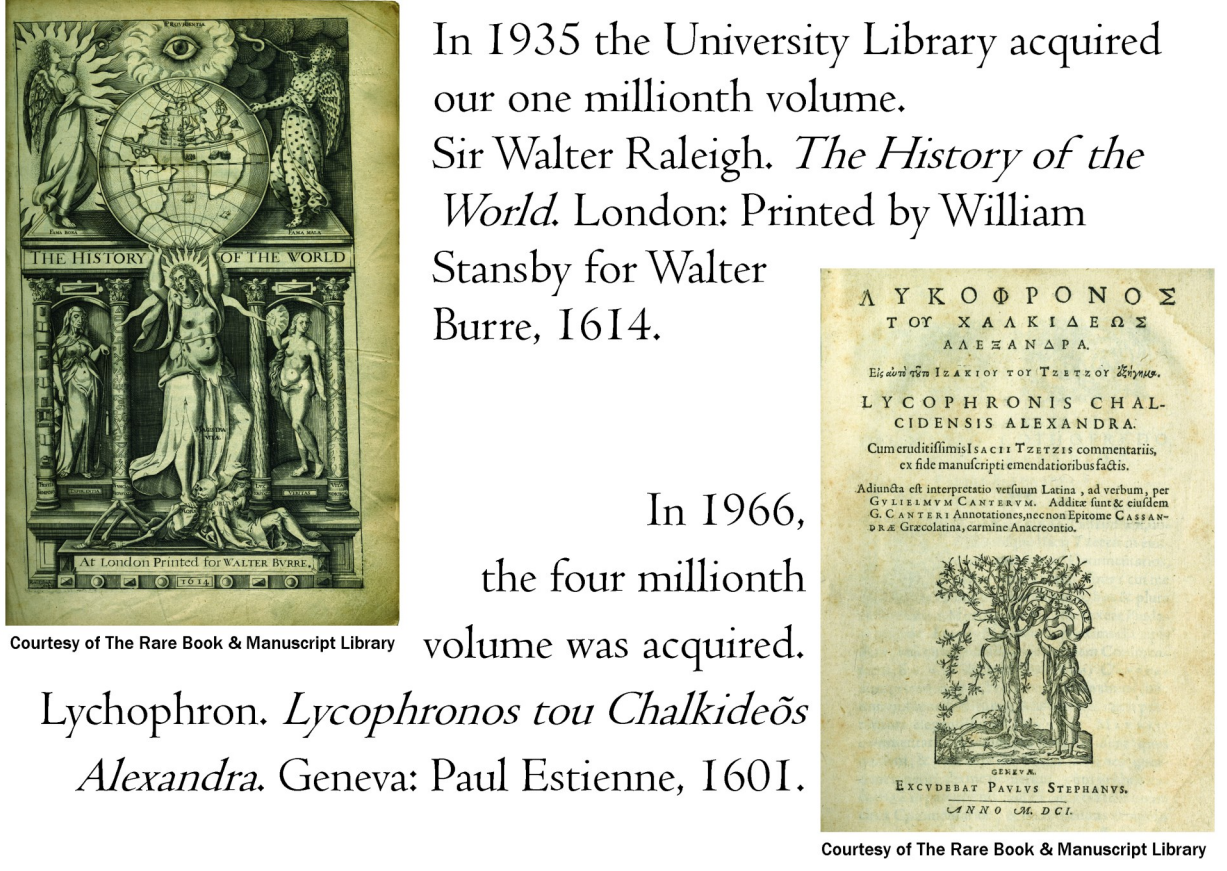
Original Catalog: Breakdown by Subject Category				
Subject Category	Total Titles	Total Volumes	Still Have Original Title	Still Have Original Title
Agricultural	32	38	28	84.8%
Educational	98	101	87	87.9%
General Literature	57	251	54	93.1%
History and Biography	135	232	128	94.1%
Law and Politics	15	318	12	80.0%
Philosophical	35	46	33	91.7%
Scientific	48	92	46	93.8%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>1,078</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>91.1%</b>



Although the majority of the original collection is still held by the University Library, it was not viewed as a discrete collection; rather than being kept together as a cohesive whole, it has instead been scattered, as various collection management projects have resulted in transfers to different library locations.

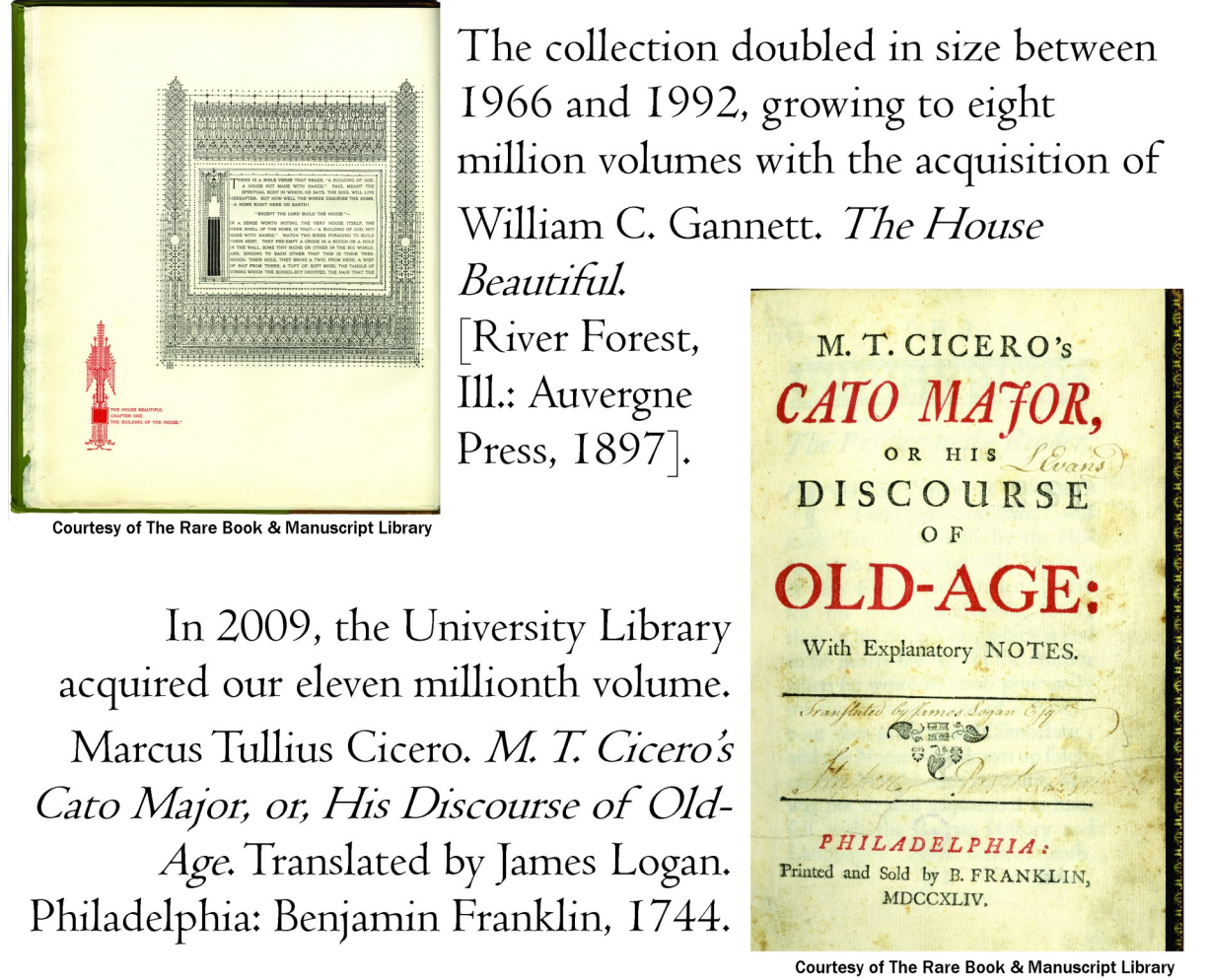


# Collection Milestones

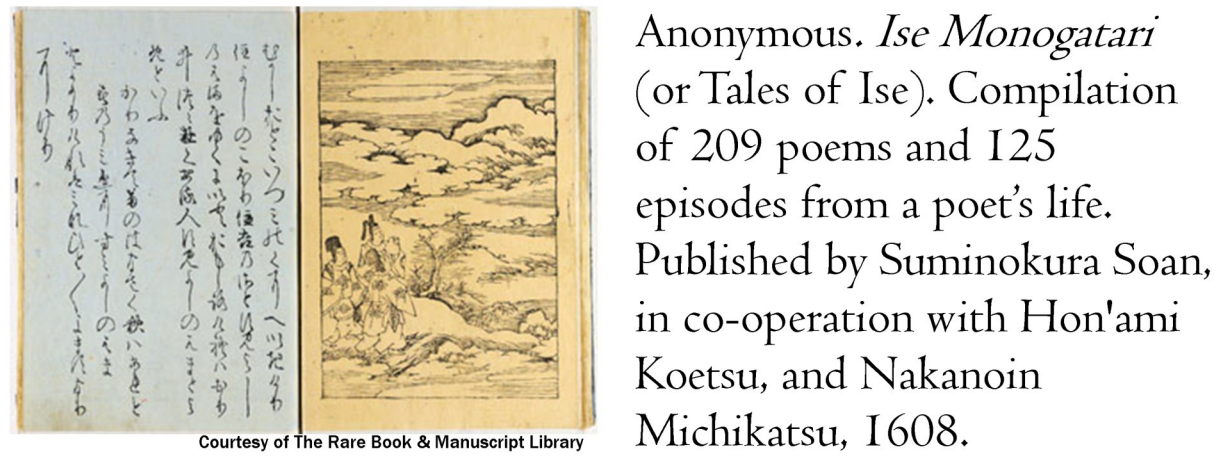


In 1935 the University Library acquired our one millionth volume. Sir Walter Raleigh. *The History of the World*. London: Printed by William Stansby for Walter Burre, 1614.

In 1966, the four millionth volume was acquired. Lychophron. *Lycophronos tou Chalkideōs Alexandra*. Geneva: Paul Estienne, 1601.

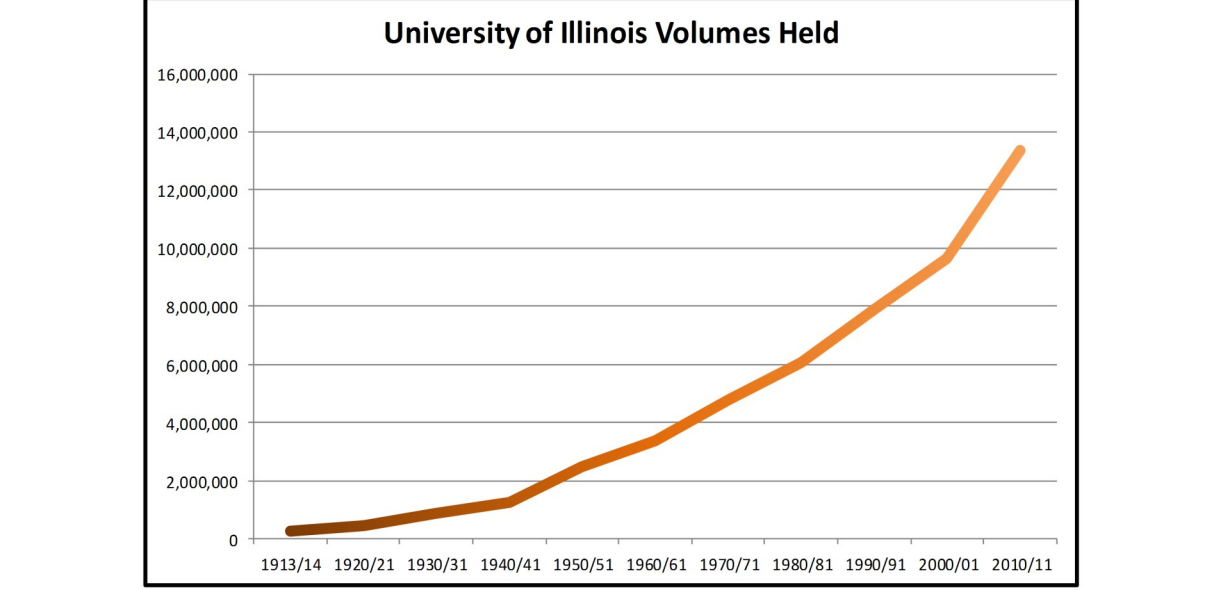


The collection doubled in size between 1966 and 1992, growing to eight million volumes with the acquisition of William C. Gannett. *The House Beautiful*. [River Forest, Ill.: Auvergne Press, 1897].

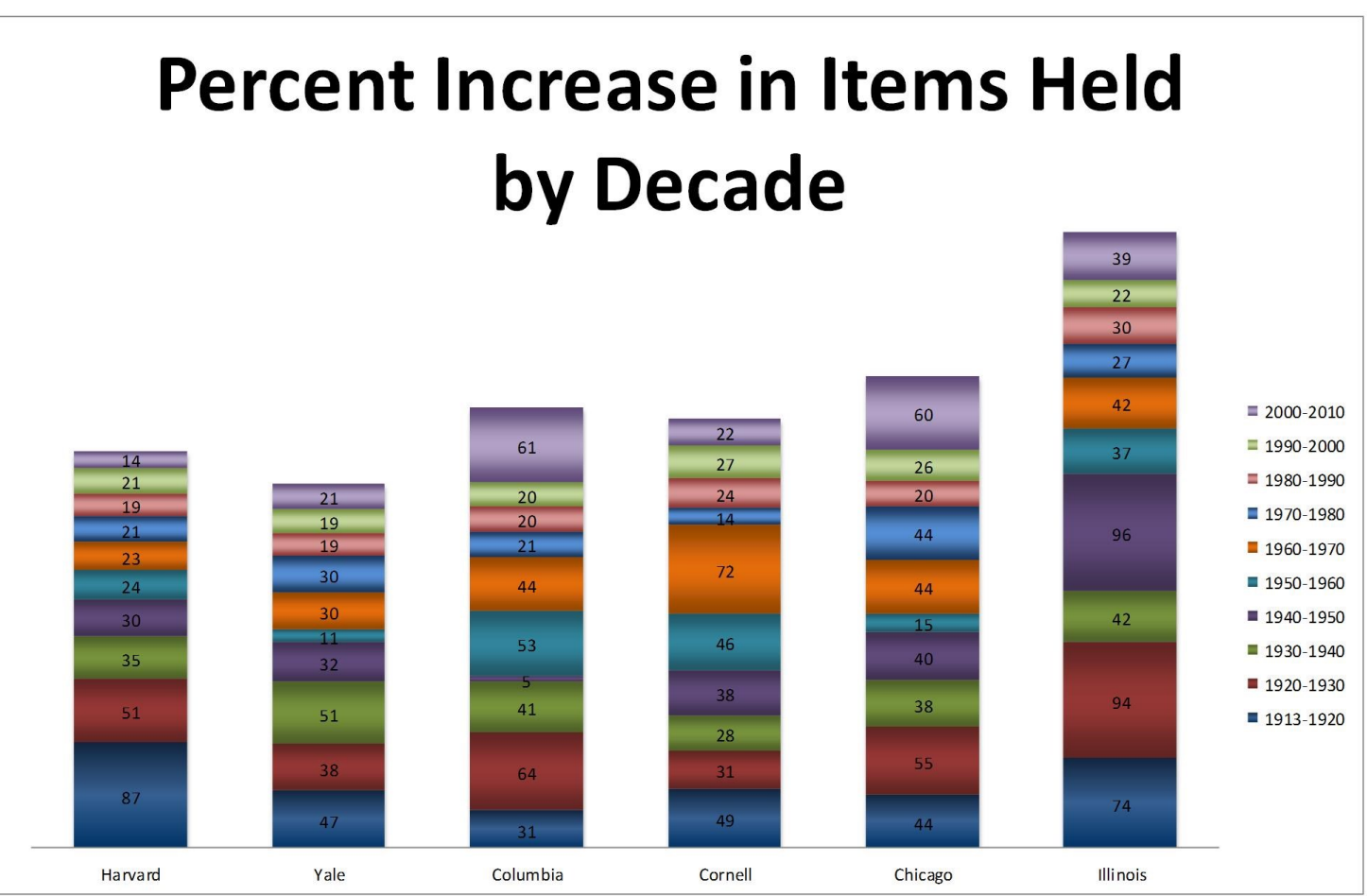
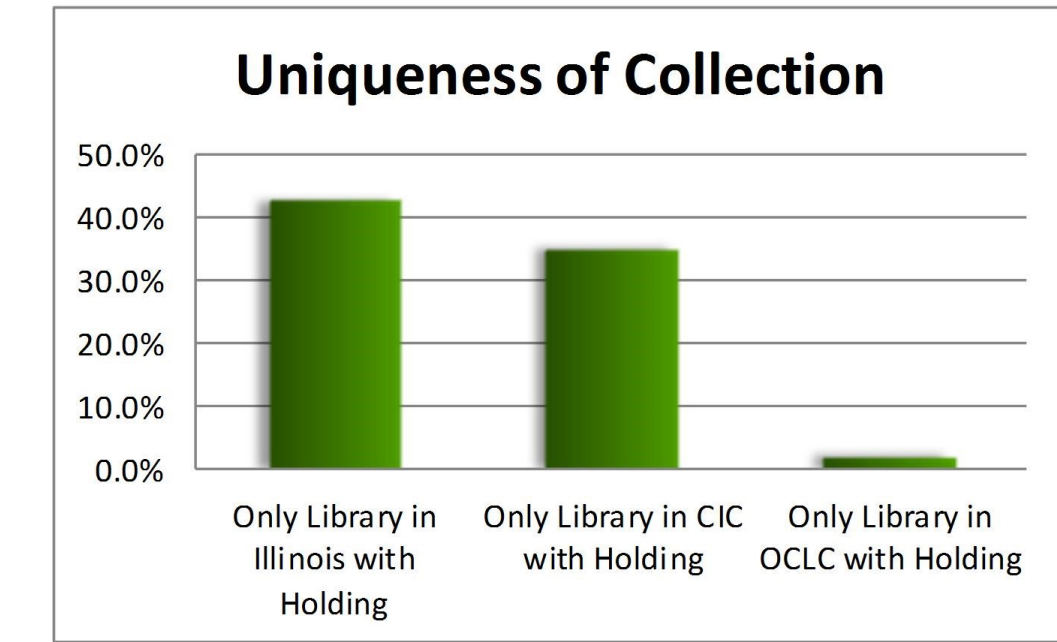
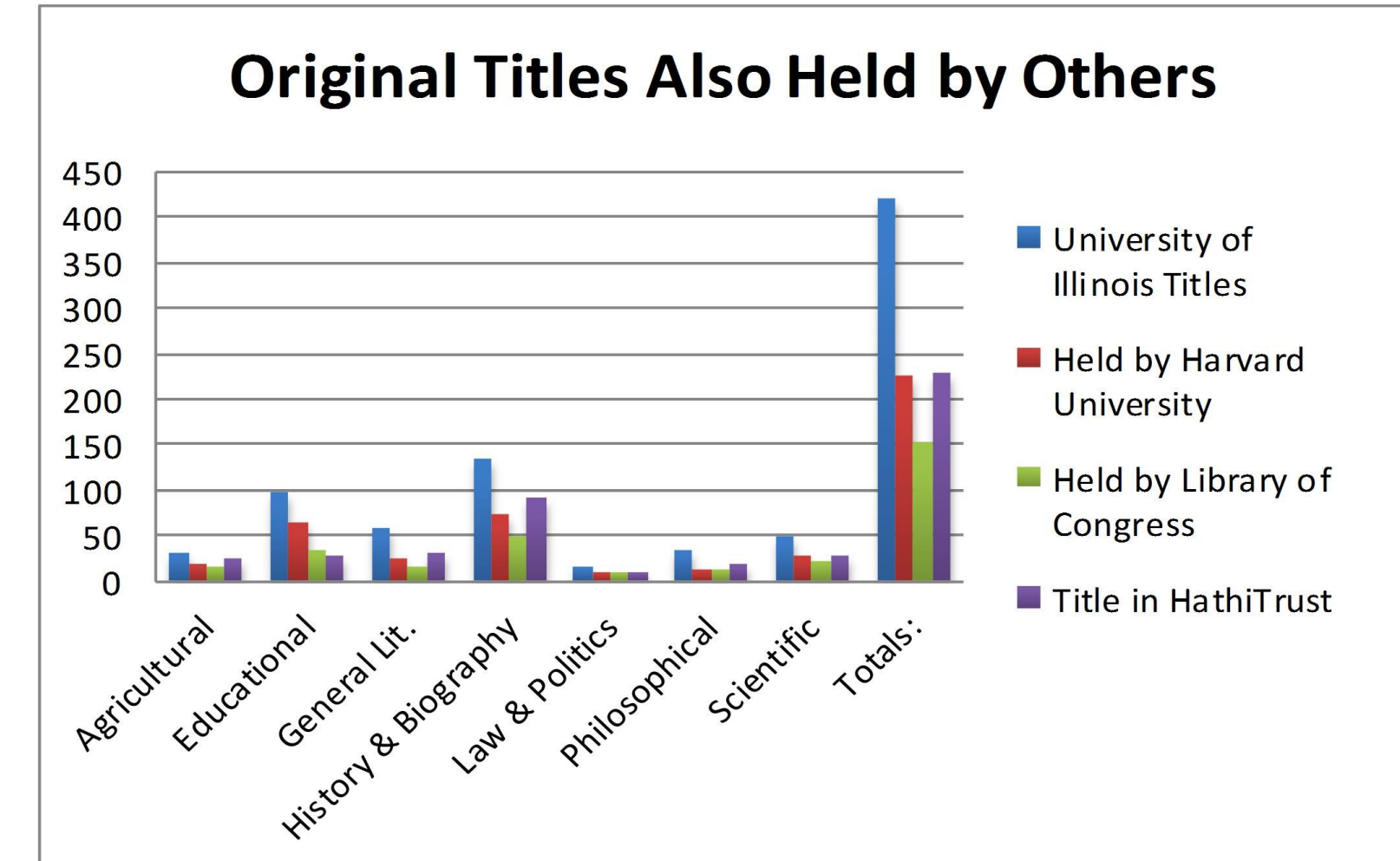
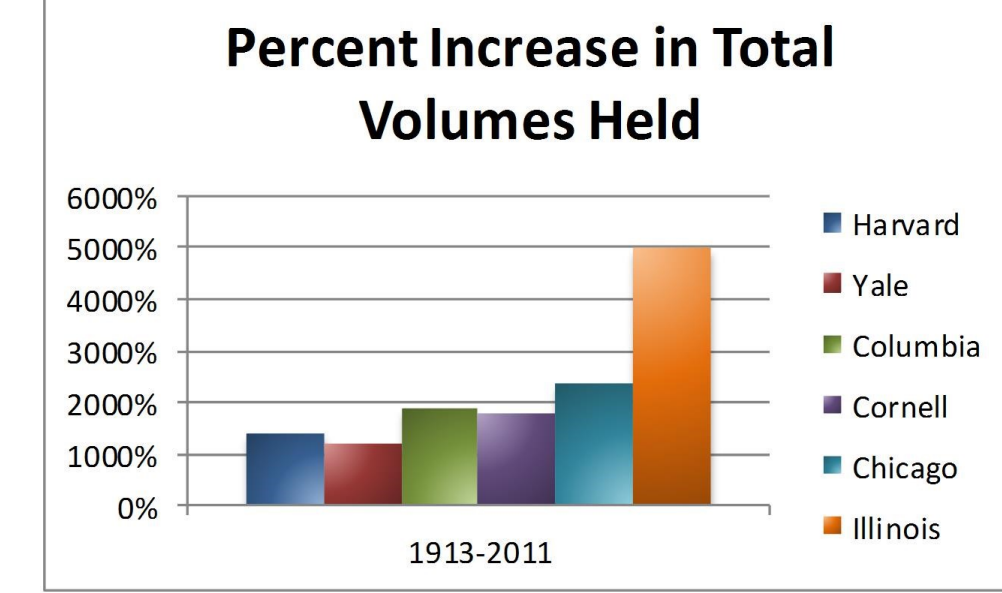
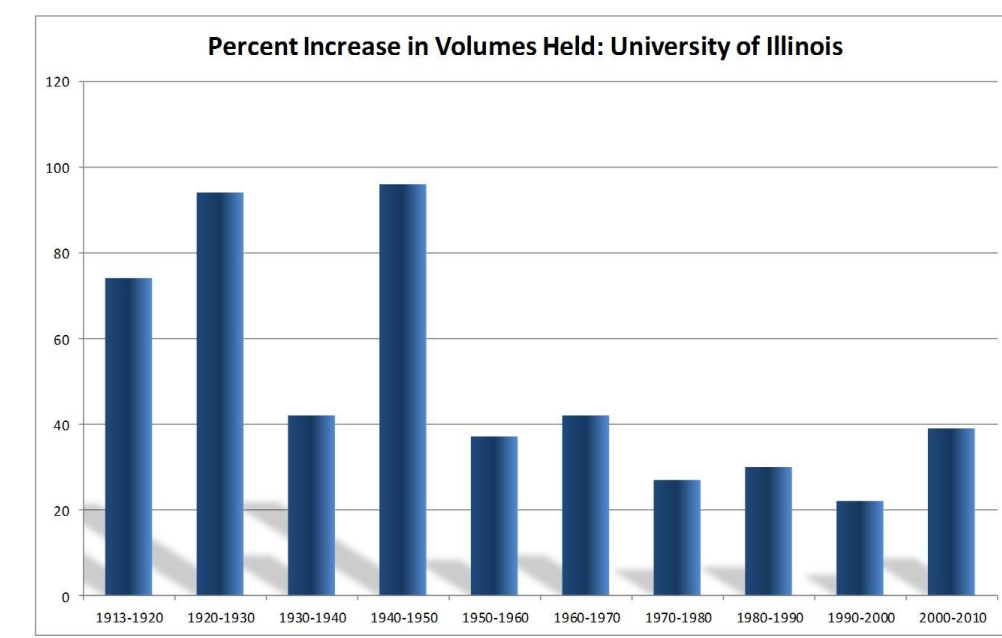


The collection doubled in size between 1966 and 1992, growing to eight million volumes with the acquisition of William C. Gannett. *The House Beautiful*. [River Forest, Ill.: Auvergne Press, 1897].

In 2009, the University Library acquired our eleven millionth volume. Marcus Tullius Cicero. *M. T. Cicero's Cato Major, or, His Discourse of Old-Age*. Translated by James Logan. Philadelphia: Benjamin Franklin, 1744.

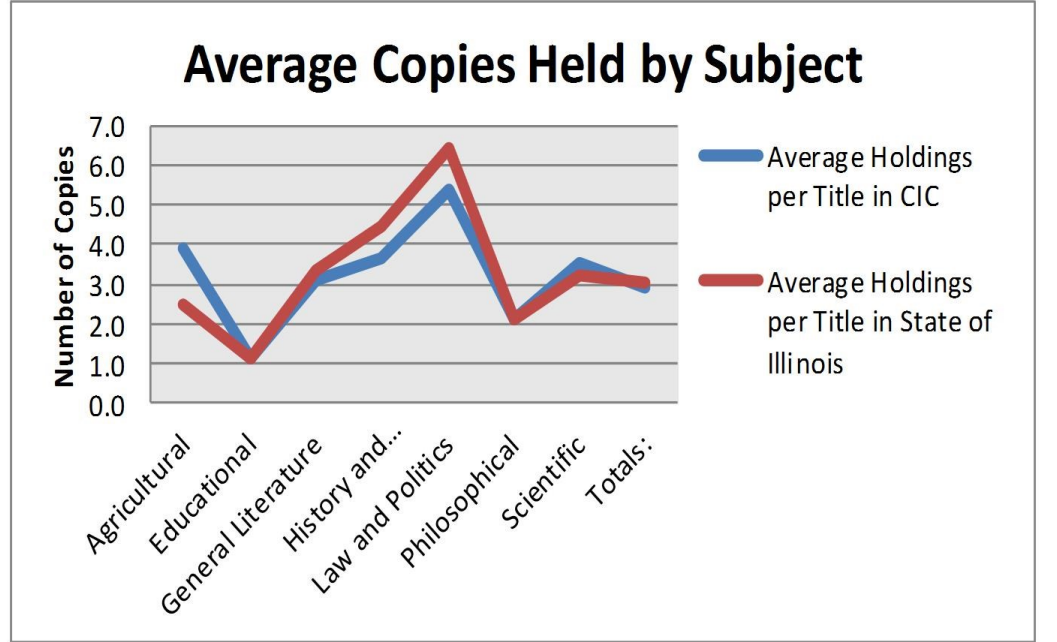


# A Collection Explosion: Evaluating a Collection 145 Years in the Making



In 1913, the earliest year for which consistent data to make comparisons was found, the University of Illinois ranked 6th among academic libraries in the United States for number of items held, behind Harvard University, Yale University, Columbia University, Cornell University, and the University of Chicago. Illinois' growth exploded, particularly from 1920 to 1930, when the collection almost doubled in size, and again from 1940 to 1950, when it nearly doubled again, with several other decades of impressive growth. The University of Illinois' total percent increase in collection size from 1913 to 2011 was more than double the increase seen at any of the other top five academic libraries from 1913.

Of the original 420 titles, approximately half are also held by Harvard, the Library of Congress, and are in the Hathitrust. The graphs show the breakdown of those holdings across the original seven subject categories described in the University's first annual report: Agricultural, Educational, General Literature, History and Biography, Law and Politics, Philosophical, and Scientific. Many of these original titles are also held by other CIC (Committee on Institutional Cooperation) libraries and by other libraries in the state of Illinois. Although other libraries hold many of these titles, there is still a large number of items that are unique in this original library collection, whether it be unique in Illinois, in the CIC, or a unique holding in OCLC.

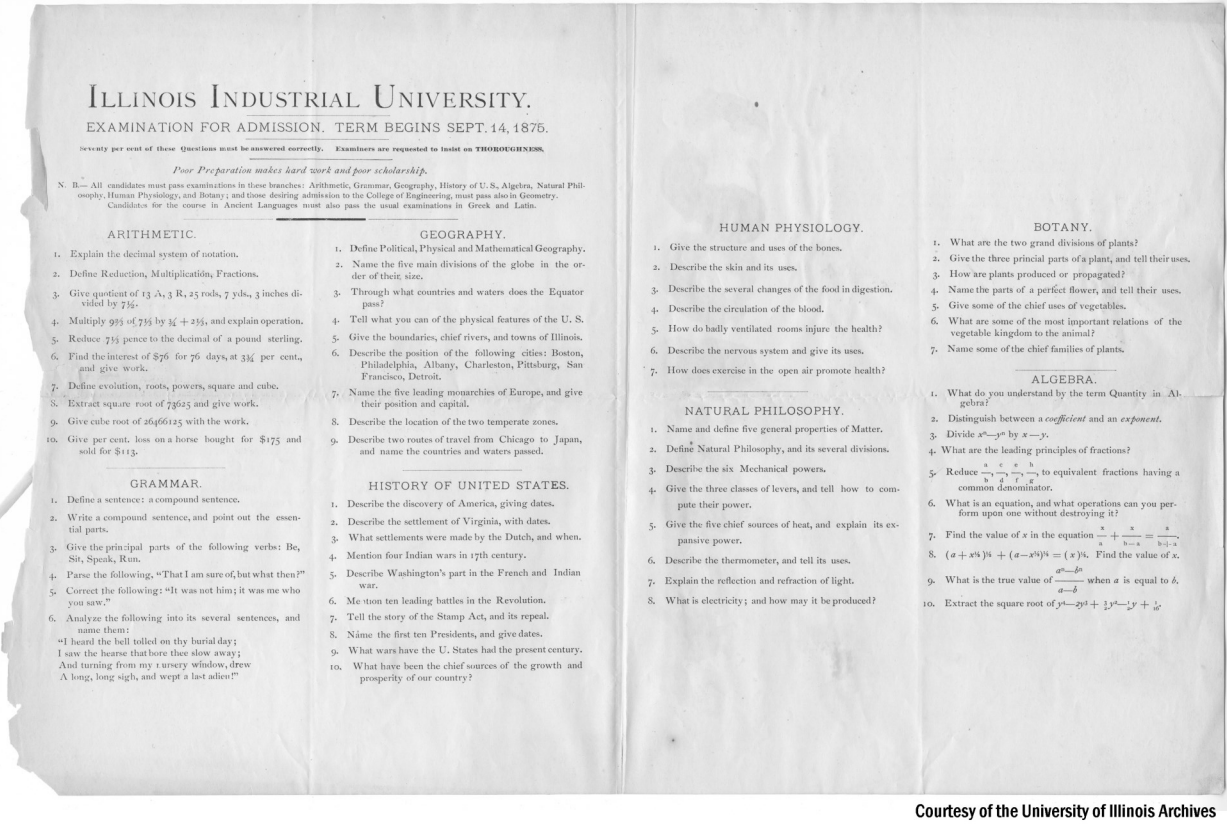


# Research Goals

This poster is the first step in taking a retrospective look at the original collection at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and illustrates the extreme growth in the collections over the years. The University Library began with just 1,078 volumes in 1868, and that number nearly quadrupled in two years, increasing the collection to 4,051 volumes by 1870. Now, 145 years later, the collection has exploded to contain more than 13 million volumes. As we continue to expand on this topic in future research we will be asking

- What was the composition of the original collection, where did it go, and how does it compare to others' holdings?
- Where and how have the collections been stored, preserved, cataloged, digitized, circulated?
- What information can be learned through data mining digital surrogates?
- Other than size, how did that collection differ from the collection of today?
- What does this tell us about the collection of tomorrow?

This research will continue to explore the guiding principles and collection development policies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and how those have changed and have shaped the collection over time. As the Library approaches its sesquicentennial, we must look more closely at what it meant and continues to mean to have a premier research collection, thinking critically about where and how our collection should grow from here.



Mary S. Laskowski, Head, Collection Management Services  
mkschnei@illinois.edu  
Jennifer A. Maddox Abbott, Technical Services Project Coordinator  
maddox5@illinois.edu  
Michael A. Norman, Head, Content Access Management  
manorman@illinois.edu